

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.
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CHAPTER XXV—Continued.

"The train started on the journey which was to end in its destruction, and mile after mile sped away in silence. Once more the feeling of restraint had settled down upon us, and this time heavier than before.

"Then I remember a sudden, awful, never-to-be-forgotten crash, followed by cries and shrieks such as have rung in my ears ever since.

"I found myself flung violently forward against the opposite side of the compartment amid the smashing of woodwork, and with the presentiment of some awful doom upon me. I was half stunned, but recovering myself, found that I was not much hurt. Then I remembered my companion and turned my attention to him.

"Silas! I cried. 'Are you hurt?'" "But before he could reply, another sound was added to the awful babel of cries and groans all around.

"Fire! fire!" we heard shrieked in voices mad with terror, mingled with agonizing cries for help. The atmosphere became stifling, a sickening, insupportable odor was wafted towards us and clouds of thick, black, suffocating smoke began to drift past.

"Silas!" I shouted, in mad terror, to my friend; "come! exert yourself, if you wish to escape instant death!" "And I caught him round the body and tried to compel him to move; but in vain; he only gave a scream of agony.

"Save yourself," he groaned. "I cannot stir; and I think my leg is broken."

"I was almost demented, and tore at the shattered woodwork which made his prison, with my fingers; but only to increase his agony, without freeing him from his horrible position. And already the atmosphere was like that of a furnace, and hell itself seemed to be open. I could not save him, but I might save myself. I knew the door on the other side was unlocked, so that I might attempt to escape that way.



"I have nothing to forgive," was the broken answer.

"I prepared for flight, but before I had taken the first step I was stayed by my friend's voice—

"James," he cried—and the roaring of the flames almost drowned his voice, which was sharp and shrill with horror—"put me out of my misery. Save yourself, but shoot me through the brain first! Quick! quick!"

"It was the most merciful death, and, without pausing a second—which on that awful day might have meant a human life—I drew the revolver, placed it to his temple—"My God!" from the reader—"and pulled the trigger. Even as I heard the report a thin tongue of flame curled upward through the splintered flooring, and without even looking back—without even a glance at the face of my friend, I forced open the door and sprang from the now burning carriage with the smoking weapon still grasped in my right hand. In doing so I trod upon some smoldering timber and wrenched my ankle severely, so that for a long time I was lame.

"A few hours later and I was conveyed to town, together with a company of the other survivors, and as soon as I reached my destination my strength forsook me and I was prostrated for days by a nervous illness, the result of my late terrible experience.

"When I recovered, it was to find that there was a hue and cry already after me—that the partially consumed corpse of a first class passenger had been discovered about through the head, and that all the evidence pointed to the crime having been committed by a fellow traveler who had made his escape during the terror and confusion of the catastrophe and who was being eagerly sought for.

"Since then, I have had to submit to the ordeal of seeing myself confronted by the reward of one hundred pounds offered for my detection; and have lived in daily and hourly fear of being charged with the commission of this crime—if crime it can be called—of which I was guiltless, in thought, if not in deed. It is this which is killing me, and I do not regret it.

"Sometimes I regret nothing; not even the shot which took my best friend's life and branded me with the brand of Cain!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Dr. Jeremiah's Little Bill.

"This was all. The reader drew a long, shuddering breath. 'My God!' he whispered, voice and everything seeming to fail him for the moment, in

the face of the revelation which had burst upon him. 'My God! To think that I should know the truth at last! But how marvelous! How utterly beyond the realization of my wildest dreams!'

Not for an instant did it occur to him to think the narrative false. It was too astounding and, what was more, it agreed so exactly with all the strange, and hitherto mysterious, circumstances which had attended the tragedy. And the man he had wronged—the man he had hunted down and would have betrayed to death, believing him to be the vilest of his species—whose whole nature he had read falsely by the light of his unjust suspicions! His eyes were closed—he seemed to be hardly breathing. Had he fainted—or—was this death?

Was he to be left alone, and in the dark, with a dead or dying man? He rushed to the door and dashed out of the house in search of a doctor.

James Ferrers was not dead; but the nearest medical man, on being summoned to the house, shook his head over the case.

"Heart!" he said, briefly. "Get him to bed. I do not think he will ever need to get up again."

By this time the whole household was roused, and the sick man's daughter was hanging in speechless grief, over her father's unconscious form.

At one time it was feared that he would pass away unconscious, but the untiring application of restoratives was at last productive of some effect, and two or three hours later the dying man opened his eyes.

He saw his daughter kneeling beside his pillow; and, not far away, his old friend's son, who, by some means, had asserted and maintained a right to remain in the sick room.

The doctor, seeing that the patient had regained consciousness for a while before the end, stood aside, so as not

to interfere with those last solemn moments.

The dying man's gaze rested upon the young man—who, in obedience to a gesture, approached and bent over him—with a strange intensity, and his lips moved.

"Do you forgive?" he murmured close to the other's ear, so that the words might be heard by none but him for whom they were intended.

"I have nothing to forgive," was the broken answer. "You acted for the best, and I bless you for it."

A look of peace fell upon the corpse-like countenance upon the pillow, and he turned his eyes again upon his daughter.

"Don't grieve much for me, my child," said he; "and when I am gone—"

He gave a deep sigh, his eyes closed, and his head fell a little to one side.

The doctor pressed forward. "This is the end," he said, "and a very peaceful one."

But it was not quite the end. Once more the dying eyes opened, and fixed themselves upon the pale, remorseful face of the young man who had once hoped to see him expire his deed upon the scaffold.

Then he turned them from him to the bowed head of the girl who knelt, with her face hidden, upon the other side of the bed, and back again. His lips moved for the last time, but no words issued from them.

He tried again, and this time—though there was no sound—it seemed to the other, who had his eyes fixed upon them, and his ear strained to catch the slightest whisper, that the motion of the lips might be translated into the words, "Keep my secret!"

"I will—I will," he answered, and even as he uttered these words the end came.

The next day Ted Burritt returned home unexpectedly.

The first thing he did was to write a brief summary of events to Dr. Jeremiah Cartwright, who, in spite of the very short time which had elapsed since his last visit, again made his appearance at Magnolia Lodge—ostensibly to hear further details, but more particularly to carry out a deep laid scheme of his own.

"And what do you mean to do—oh? I mean, about the young lady? Oh, you needn't look as though you don't understand what I am talking about! I've not forgotten what you told me about her. What a beautiful bluish!"

And the little gentleman chuckled; then, all at once, became preternatural

ally grave. "By-the-by," he said, "how ly, and with a noticeable tendency to avoid his friend's eye, 'about that bill of mine.'"

Ted looked surprised. "Bill?" he repeated. "Yes, bill," continued the doctor. "You didn't suppose I was going to let you off, did you? You haven't forgotten what I said a little while back about sending one in, have you?"

The young man looked and felt non-plussed.

"I have made up my mind to take it in kind."

"What I mean is," continued Dr. Cartwright, "that instead of receiving payment for whatever services I may have rendered, in ready money, I am willing to take it out in some other article."

"And what might that article be?" was the natural but still perplexed inquiry.

"Your sister," was the brief and much to the point response.

"By Jove!" was the exclamation it called forth—followed by, "you don't mean it?"

"Don't I, though!" was the determined reply. "I've been meaning it for some time past. What's more, I've sounded the young lady—I don't mean with a stethoscope—and she wasn't half so much surprised as you seem to be."

The brother of the young lady in question burst out laughing.

"I suppose I shall have to give in, and I may as well do it sooner than later."

About three months later a gentleman in the most impeccable attire called at the residence of the late James Ferrers, Esq., of Belmont House, Hampstead, and requested to see Miss Ferrers.

That young lady, who had descended to encounter her visitor quite in ignorance as to his identity, was confounded beyond measure to discover, in the supposed stranger, none other than that same individual whom she had first met at the Royal Academy and who had afterwards occasioned her the greatest perplexity of mind by doubling the part of the young man who waited at table and cleaned the plate.

Only—he had grown the loveliest moustache and it seemed perfectly impossible to imagine for a moment that he had ever done such a thing as polish the forks and spoons and make himself generally useful.

Ted plunged at once into the object of his visit.

"I should have called much sooner," he remarked with a compassionate glance at her deep mourning, "but was afraid of intruding upon your retirement. I have a statement to make—an explanation to give, which I cannot withhold any longer."

He came nearer to her—and oh, the presumption of the creature!—actually ventured to take her hand.

"Do you remember being at the Academy, one day last June, and dropping your catalogue?"

Did she not? But she made no audible reply, and the explanation thus propitiously commenced was continued without any interruption beyond an occasional stifled exclamation on the part of its recipient.

It is not necessary, however, to report the whole of what passed during the interview. A certain portion only of it need be referred to as being of some interest.

"And you really mean to say," said Miss Ferrers to the young man, "you really mean to say that you fell in love with me then and there, and took the situation, and put up with everything, just for the sake of being under the same roof with me?"

He looked at her strangely for a moment before answering.

"What other reason could there have been?" he asked.

She clasped her hands together in delight.

"Whatever will the girls at school say to this?"

(The End.)

Beecher's Deacon Went to Sleep.

"Pew sleepers are one of the bugbears of preachers," said the Rev. Robert Collyer, the veteran New York minister. "I can speak feelingly from experience. On one occasion when Henry Ward Beecher asked me to go to Plymouth Church to talk to his people, he remarked—jokingly, let us hope—that most of them were hard working folk who needed plenty of rest on Sunday, and he felt that a sermon from me might be gratefully received."

"In the course of my talk I mentioned this, and said that it was, however, a matter upon which my feelings could not be hurt, and that I owed this imperviousness to Mr. Beecher himself. I told them that, one Sunday, years before, when I was attending a service at old Plymouth and Mr. Beecher was thundering forth, I saw one of his deacons asleep in a front pew."

"I went on to say that always after this, whenever I saw a man slumbering peacefully through my most stirring efforts in the pulpit, I would say to myself: 'Well, let him sleep; even the great Beecher can't keep 'em all awake.'—Success."

The Vogue of Pantalots.

Pantalots came into vogue about 1820. They were loose, flapping frills tied on under the knee and hanging over the foot. The strings generally broke or slipped down, and one learns of a young mother's trials with those horrid things in a letter quoted by Mrs. Earle, which says: "My finest dainty pair, with real Swiss lace, is quite useless to me, for I lost one leg. I saw that mean Mrs. Spring wearing it last week for a tucker. My help says she won't stay if she has to wash more than seven pairs a week for Myrtilla."

LIVE STOCK



Reproduction of Quality.

It has been assumed that all good animals had the power to reproduce in their offspring the good qualities possessed by themselves, under the operations of the general law that like produces like. But when we get down to statistics, it is discovered that this theory cannot be entirely relied upon in breeding operations. A careful compilation of figures goes to show that a very large number of animals of high quality are poorly provided with ability to transmit such qualities to their offspring. But here and there are animals that, being high in quality, are able to transmit the quality for which they are noted to all their offspring, or, at least, to a very large percentage of them. It therefore becomes necessary for the breeders of live stock to discover which are the animals that will do this.

There have been horses remarkable for speed that yet were unable to produce colts with like powers of speed, while now and then a speedy hearse appears that can produce offspring with like powers as himself. The same truth runs through all the breeds of live stock. The work of educating man along this line has just begun. The pedigrees of 34,000 race horses have been tabulated, and their get also investigated. Of these 34,000 trotters, only a little over 100 were able to produce numerous offspring having speed qualities. The difficulty with such an investigation is that the real value of a horse can not be known till he is dead. Thus, Hambletonian Ten died, a cart horse in Kentucky, before the world had discovered his wonderful ability to get speed in his offspring.

Our stockmen are now taking up the study in earnest and are making records of the get of various animals, as to the qualities of such get. Thus, in selecting a bull to head the Holstein herd, the University of Illinois selected one whose offspring and sisters and female relatives had proven good milkers. It was not enough that the animal himself had the proper conformation.

The tendency of such an investigation is to put at the head of the flocks and herds mature animals. This is a movement that can go on but slowly, as it must require the labor of thousands of men and must take years of time to arrive at a conclusion of much weight; but when once arrived at the conclusion is worth all it costs. A generation of this kind of labor is sure to greatly modify the live stock industry and develop it along the most prepotent lines.

Growth of Live Stock Associations.

During the past ten years there has been a remarkable growth in the number and influence of live stock associations. Ten years ago there were few improved live stock breeders' associations, and what there were held conventions generally sparsely attended. But new associations were organized in different states and the interest has steadily increased in interest, till now some of them have taken on the aspect of college courses of short duration. The meat-cutting demonstrations have become prominent features and such demonstrations are attended by hundreds of people instead of by scores. The whole range of influence of the associations has been enlarged. As a result the chief factors in stock raising have been investigated as never before. Even things that were considered as settled are being again considered and the truth is being discovered.

There is a great tendency to consolidate these associations, or, at least, to combine them into leagues along certain lines. As an example note the Illinois Live Stock Breeders' Association, which is composed of four others devoted to the raising of cattle, hogs, horses and sheep. Two great national associations were formed, but one went out of existence to leave a clear field to the other, which now includes over 100 live stock associations of various kinds.

The growth of these associations has had a stimulating effect on the live stock industry. The amount of light that has been let in on the dark places has made it very difficult for unreliable men to do business in the rearing and selling of live stock. It has made it easier for the men that are honest and wish to do business in a way that meets the approval of their fellow-men. Such is always the result of light.

These associations are certain to become more powerful from year to year and to mightily affect all phases of the live stock industry. Every stockman should realize their benefit and ally himself with some of them. By so doing he will get good and do good.

Winter Hogs.

Why more winter pigs are not raised is explained by the general impression prevailing among hog raisers that winter pigs do not pay. This is due to the lack of equipment for the raising of winter pigs both as to the houses in which they are to be kept and the food for their support. It is certain that if a man would raise winter pigs he must plan for it long before the time comes for breeding the sows for fall litters; for he must insure a supply of nitrogenous feed to take the place of the green grass that the spring litters get. Winter pigs will pay when there are proper arrangements for their care.

Billion Dollar Grass.

When we introduced this remarkable grass three years ago, little did we dream it would be the most talked-of grass in America, the biggest, quick, hay producer on earth; but this has come to pass.

Agr. Editors wrote about it, Agr. College Professors lectured about it, Agr. Institute Orators talked about it, while in the farm home by the quiet fireside, in the corner grocery, in the village postoffice, at the creamery, at the depot; in fact wherever farmers gathered, Salzer's Billion Dollar Grass, that wonderful grass, good for 5 to 14 tons per acre, and lots of pasture besides, is always a theme worthy of the farmer's voice.

Then comes Bromus Inermis, than which there is no better grass or better permanent hay producer on earth. Growers wherever soil is found. Then the farmer talks about Salzer's Toccante, which will produce 100 stacks from one kernel of seed, 11 ft. high, in 100 days, rich in nutrition and greedily eaten by cattle, hogs, etc., and is good for 80 tons of green food per acre.

Victoria Rape, which can be grown at 25c a ton, and Speltz at 20c a bu., both great food for cattle, also come in for their share in the discussion.

JUST SEND 10c IN STAMPS and this notice to John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis., for their big catalog and farm seed samples. (W. N. U.)

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We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions and financially able to carry out any obligations made by him.

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The matrimonial broken is responsible for many broken hearts.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPERS Use the best. That's why they buy Red Cross Ball Blue. At leading grocers, 5 cents.

Suicide Wind. In Brazil and other parts of South America the natives know and fear a certain condition of the air, which they call "suicide wind." It is not a superstition, but an actual condition of the atmosphere which seems to drive people to madness, and during its continuance self-inflicted deaths are numerous. Criminologists and scientists all over the world are interested in this peculiar atmospheric influence, which is indicated by a soft, moist, warm air that settles heavily on the earth.

Moon's Influence on Storms. It has been said that thunderstorms are influenced by the moon. Nearly 12,000 observations collected by the United States Weather Bureau shows a preponderance of 32 per cent in the first half of the lunar month. The greatest number of thunderstorms come between the new moon and the first quarter; the least number between the full moon and the last quarter. This is, perhaps, the only satisfactory evidence that the weather is at all influenced by the moon.

To Inoculate Calves. As a protection against consumption, it is proposed to inoculate every calf in Germany with specially prepared tuberculosis bacilli, on the plan of vaccination, in order that the animal may not contract tuberculosis later.

ON A RANCH. Woman Found the Food That Fitted Her.

A newspaper woman went out to a Colorado ranch to rest and recuperate and her experience with the food probably is worth recounting.

"The woman at the ranch was pre-eminently the worst housekeeper I have ever known—poor soul, and poor me!"

"I simply had to have food good and plenty of it, for I had broken down from overwork and was so weak I could not sit up over one hour at a time. I knew I could not get well unless I secured food I could easily digest and that would supply the greatest amount of nourishment."

"One day I obtained permission to go through the pantry and see what I could find. Among other things I came across a package of Grape-Nuts which I had heard of but never tried. I read the description on the package and became deeply interested, so then and there I got a saucer and some cream and tried the famous food."

"It tasted delicious to me and seemed to freshen and strengthen me greatly so I stipulated that Grape-Nuts and cream be provided each day instead of other food, and I literally lived on Grape-Nuts and cream for two or three months."

"If you could have seen how fast I got well it would have pleased and surprised you. I am now perfectly well and strong again and know exactly how I got well and that was on Grape-Nuts that furnished me a powerful food I could digest and make use of."

"It seems to me no brain worker can afford to overlook Grape-Nuts after my experience." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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